



FARRINGFORD.

THE WORKS OF
ALFRED TENNYSON.

LOCKSLEY HALL,
AND OTHER POEMS.

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LOCKSLEY HALL,
AND OTHER POEMS.

THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke ;
And ah ! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto 'Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarised a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd, under Heaven
None else could understand ;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour ;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

“ O Walter, I have shelter'd here
 Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

“ Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
 The girls upon the cheek,

“ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
 And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
 And turn'd the cowls adrift :

“ And I have seen some score of those
 Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
 To chase the deer at five ;

“ And all that from the town would stroll,
 Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
 Went by me, like a stork :

“ The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
 And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
 For puritanic stays :

“ And I have shadow’d many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn ;

“ And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap’d and laugh’d
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill’d his tinsel shaft.

“ I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all ;

“ For those and theirs, by Nature’s law,
Have faded long ago ;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

“ From when she gamboll’d on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

“ I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho’ I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass :

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace,
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town ;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy :
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

“ An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

“ But, as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

“ She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf ;
She left the new piano shut :
She could not please herself.

“ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

“ A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

“ But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

“ And here she came, and round me play’d,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my ‘giant bole ;’

“ And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

“ I wish’d myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock’d her hands.

“ Yet seem’d the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine’s fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.”

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

“ O yes, she wander’d round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss’d the name she found,
And sweetly murmur’d thine.

“ A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

“ Then flush’d her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss’d me once again.

“ Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr’d :

“ And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern’d,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn’d.

“ Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet’s waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden’s tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust :

"For ah ! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

“Tis little more : the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

“Her eyelids dropp’d their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro’ all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix’d with sighs.

“I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull’d them in my own.

“Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second flutter’d round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

“A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

“Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow’d all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

“ But in a pet she started up, .
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

“ And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

“ I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

“ O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.”

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet !
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes !
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime.
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke ;
And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

OF love that never found his earthly close,
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts
 Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
 Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout
 For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
 Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
 System and empire? Sin itself be found
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become
 Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years,
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears, would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief !)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul !

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, “Who is this? behold thy bride,”
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :
Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,

‘The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow’d all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn’d upon its object thro’ such tears
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way

To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then follow’d counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix’d
In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused
Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung
Love-charm’d to listen : all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will—
Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by
My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
O might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales :
 Old James was with me : we that day had been
 Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
 And found him in Llanberis : then we crost
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up
 The counter side ; and that same song of his
 He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore
 They said he lived shut up within himself,
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, " Give,
 Cram us with all," but count not me the herd !

To which " They call me what they will," he said :

“ But I was born too late : the fair-new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown’d—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn :

“ We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things
move ;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;
The dark Earth follows wheel’d in her ellipse ;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Ah, tho’ the times, when some new thought can
bud,
Are but as poets’ seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

“ When wealth no more shall rest in mounded
heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man

Thro' all the season of the golden year.

“ Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens be wrens ?

If all the world were falcons, what of that ?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,

But he not less the eagle. Happy days

Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press ,

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;

Knit land to land, and blowing havenward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

“ But we grow old. Ah ! when shall all men's
good

Be each man's rule, and universal Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the land,

And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden year ? ”

Thus far he flow'd, and ended ; whereupon

“ Ah, folly ! ” in mimic cadence answer'd James—

“ Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,

Not in our time, nor in our children's time,

'Tis like the second world to us that live ;

'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.”

With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis :
Then added, all in heat :

“ What stuff is this !

Old writers push'd the happy season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward : dreamers both :
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge
His hand into the bag : but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.”

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

IT little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
 me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move .
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains : but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;
Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God !
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."

Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go : take back thy gift :
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born..
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee ; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :
How can my nature longer mix with thine ?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground ;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave ;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn ;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis
early morn :

Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon
the bugle horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews
call,

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locks-
ley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the
sandy tracts,

And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went
to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the
mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver
braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth
sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of
Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land
reposed ;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it
closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could
see :
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be.——

I the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's
breast ;

In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another
crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd
dove ;

In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be
for one so young,

And her eyes on all my motions with a mute
observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the
truth to me,

Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to
thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and
a light,

As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern
night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden
storm of sighs—

All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel
eyes—

Saying, “I have hid my feelings, fearing they should
do me wrong ;”

Saying, “Dost thou love me, cousin ?” weeping, “I
have loved thee long.”

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his
glowing hands ;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
chords with might ;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the
copses ring,

And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fullness
of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the
stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the
lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no
more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren,
barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs
have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish
tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—
to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart
than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by
day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a
clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent
its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his
horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy : think not they are
glazed with wine.
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in
thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-
wrought :
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy
lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-
stand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with
my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's
disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength
of youth !

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living
truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule !

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of
the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou less
unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but
bitter fruit ?

I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the
root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years
should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the
mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew
her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak
and move :
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love
she bore?
No—she never loved me truly : love is love for ever-
more.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the
poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be
put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on
the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring
at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows
rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his
drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou
wilt weep!

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the
phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine
ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness
on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice
will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble
dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings
thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's
breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not
his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the
two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down
daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself
was not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy self-
contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should
I care ?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon
days like these ?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to
golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should
do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's
ground,

When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds
are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that
Honour feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous
Mother-Age :

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the
strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of
my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming
years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's
field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and
nearer drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary
dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him
then,

Underneath the light he looks at, in among the
throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping
something new :

That which they have done but earnest of the things
that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could
see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of agic
sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with
costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd
a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central
blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the
thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-
flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful
realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal
law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left
me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out
of joint :
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from
point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping
nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process
of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his
youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a
boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on
the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and
more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a
laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of
his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for
their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'
string ?

I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's
pleasure, woman's pain—

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a
shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd
with mine,

Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for
some retreat

Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to
beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-
starr'd ;—

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far
away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and
happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European
flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the
trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of
sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this
march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that
shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have
scope and breathing-space ;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they
shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances
in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows
of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my
words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with
lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or
clime?

I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by
one,

Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's
moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward
let us range,

Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing
grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the
younger day:

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when
life begun:

Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,
weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not
set.

Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy
yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to
Locksley Hall !

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the
roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over
heath and holt,

Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire
or snow ;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and
I go.

GODIVA.

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamouring, “ If we pay, we starve ! ”
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair

A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?"—"But I would die," said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk !"—"Alas !" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it ;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition ; but that she would loose
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the
street,
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclassp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,

The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity :
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless

noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
One after one : but even then she gain'd
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :

A pleasant hour has past away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek.

The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,

Nor look with that too-earnest eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their place,

And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :

In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs

Droop sleepily : no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.

More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask

Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,

The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;
The page has caught her hand in his :

Her lips are sever'd as to speak :
His own are pouted to a kiss :
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,

The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine,

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood ;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever ; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright :
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps : on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth ;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead :
“ They perish'd in their daring deeds.”
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
“ The many fail : the one succeeds.”

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
The colour flies into his cheeks :
He trusts to light on something fair ;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind :
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
“ Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be ! ”

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old :
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss ;"
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

“ O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! ”

“ O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! ”

“ O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! ”

“ O love, thy kiss would wake the dead ! ”

And o'er them many a flowing range

Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,

And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,

The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?

And whither goest thou, tell me where ? ”

“ O seek my father's court with me,

For there are greater wonders there.”

And o'er the hills, and far away

Beyond their utmost purple rim,

Beyond the night, across the day,

Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humours lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well—were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends ;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men ;
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again ;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore ;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers ;

Titanic forces taking birth

In divers seasons, divers climes ;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake !
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care ;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there :
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you ;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fullness of the pensive mind ;
Which all too dearly self-involved.
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me :
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see :
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
 " What wonder, if he thinks me fair? "
What wonder I was all unwise,
 To shape the song for your delight,
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
 And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren :
Yet say the neighbours, when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion !
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate.
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation ;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches ;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the middle, buzz ! she went
With all her bees behind her :
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shot alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended ;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure ;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !
And make her dance attendance ;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

"Tis vain ! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle ;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle ;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of transplanting trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut,
•And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation .
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom :
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

SIR GALAHAD.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice, but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres

I find a magic bark ;

I leap on board : no helmsman steers :

I float till all is dark.

A gentle sound, an awful light !

Three angels bear the holy Grail :

With folded feet, in stoles of white,

On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !

My spirit beats her mortal bars,

As down dark tides the glory slides,

And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne

Thro' dreaming towns I go,

The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,

The streets are dumb with snow.

The tempest crackles on the leads,

And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,

And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the height ;

No branchy thicket shelter yields ;

But blessed forms in whistling storms

Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear ;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
"O just and faithful knight of God !
Ride on ! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town

Met me walking on yonder way,

“And have you lost your heart?” she said;

“And are you married yet, Edward Gray?”

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :

Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :

“Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more

Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

“Ellen Adair she loved me well,

Against her father's and mother's will :

To-day I sat for an hour and wept,

By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill

“Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;

Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;

Fill'd I was with folly and spite,

When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“Cruel, cruel the words I said!

Cruelly came they back to-day :

‘You’re too slight and fickle,’ I said,

‘To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.’

“There I put my face in the grass—

Whisper’d, ‘Listen to my despair :

I repent me of all I did :

Speak a little, Ellen Adair !’

“Then I took a pencil, and wrote

On the mossy stone, as I lay,

‘Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;

And here the heart of Edward Gray !’

“Love may come, and love may go,

And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :

But I will love no more, no more,

Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

“Bitterly wept I over the stone :

Bitterly weeping I turn’d away :

There lies the body of Ellen Adair !

And there the heart of Edward Gray !”

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL
MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port :
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood,
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ,
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

'This earth is rich in man and maid ,
 With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and shade
 Comes out, a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
 That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
'Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay :
Each month, a birth day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would met in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all :
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

'And hence this halo lives about.

The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.

He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
 And follow'd with acclaims,
 A sign to many a staring shire
 Came crowing over Thames.
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
 Till, where the street grows straiter,
 One fix'd for ever at the door,
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ;
 How out of place she makes
 The violet of a legend blow
 Among the chops and steaks !
 'Tis but a steward of the can,
 One shade more plump than common
 As just and mere a serving-man
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down
 Into the common day ?
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,
 Which I shall have to pay ?
 For, something duller than at first,
 Nor wholly comfortable,
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task ;
Lest of the fullness of my life
I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet :
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up ;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup :
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone ;
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more ;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters ;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow :
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show ;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should pass :
With time I will not quarrel :
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part : I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And whereso'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots :
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots :
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot ;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot ;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies ;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes :
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more ;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven ;
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :
They two will wed the morrow morn :
God's blessing on the day !

“He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,” said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?"
Said Lady Clare, "That ye speak so wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my child."

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said, "Not so : but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,
"The man will cleave unto his right."
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,
"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me."

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare :
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth ?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are :
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up !
Her heart within her did not fail :
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood :
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood—

“If you are not the heiress born,
And I,” said he, “the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.”

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror
 Doeth grievous wrong.
 Deep as Hell I count his error.
 Let him hear my song.
 Brave the Captain was : the seamen
 Made a gallant crew,
 Gallant sons of English freemen,
 Sailors bold and true.
 But they hated his oppression,
 Stern he was and rash ;
 So for every light transgression
 Doom'd them to the lash.
 Day by day more harsh and cruel
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
 Burnt in each man's blood.

Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,

Bullets fell like rain ;

Over mast and deck were scatter'd

Blood and brains of men.

Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken :

Every mother's son—

Down they dropt—no word was spoken—

Each beside his gun.

On the decks as they were lying,

Were their faces grim.

In their blood, as they lay dying,

Did they smile on him.

Those, in whom he had reliance

For his noble name,

With one smile of still defiance

Sold him unto shame.

Shame and wrath his heart confounded,

Pale he turn'd and red,

Till himself was deadly wounded

Falling on the dead.

Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !

Years have wander'd by,

Side by side beneath the water

Crew and Captain lie ;

There the sunlit ocean tosses

O'er them mouldering,

And the lonely seabird crosses

With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
 "If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well."
 She replies, in accents fainter,
 "There is none I love like thee."
 He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof :
 Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 "I can make no marriage present :
 Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life."
 They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand :

Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Make a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
“Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.”
So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer :
 Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly !
 He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before :

Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
"All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirit sank :
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such

That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, " Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me ! "
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
" Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in.
That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

WE left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fled to the South :
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore !
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.

The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind ; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view ;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;

At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
But each man murmur'd, " O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.

And only one among us—him
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased :
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :
But ours he swore were all diseased.
“A ship of fools,” he shriek’d in spite,
“A ship of fools,” he sneer’d and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl’d,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We lov’d the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind’s heart of peace,
And to and thro’ the counter-gale?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow’d where she led :
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,

But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before :
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT
AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

 In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring ;
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd

 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can say :
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way ;
“ It is no wonder,” said the lords,
“ She is more beautiful than day.”

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
“ This beggar maid shall be my queen ”

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave
 Yon orange sunset waning slow :
From fringes of the faded eve,
 O, happy planet, eastward go ;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise
 To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
 Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
 And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest :
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :
Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS.

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
 And saw the altar cold and bare.
 A clog of lead was round my feet,
 A band of pain across my brow ;
 " Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
 Before you hear my marriage vow "

II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
 That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,
 We met, but only meant to part.
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;
 I saw with half-unconscious eye
 She wore the colours I approved.

III.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips comprest,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV.

She told me all her friends had said ;
I raged against the public liar ;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
" No more of love ; your sex is known :
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V.

" Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—
And women's slander is the worst,—
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
Thro' you, my life will be accurst."

I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms-
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells,
"Dark porch," I said, "and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells."

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of
grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,

Wov'n in` circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ,
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and palpitat
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round :
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold, by fold
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late .
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

IV.

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.
“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast '
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

“Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

“Wine is good for shrivell’d lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp’d in clay.

“Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

“Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

“We are men of ruin'd blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

“Friendship !—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

“Virtue !—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell

“O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

“Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

“Drink, and let the parties rave .
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

“He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

“Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

“Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom. gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

“No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

“Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

“Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

“Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

“Change, reverting to the years
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

“Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance ;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

“ Lo ! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed !

“Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

“Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

“Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

“Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn.”

v.

The voice grew faint : there came a further change
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake : “Behold ! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.”

Another said : " The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."

And one : " He had not wholly quench'd his power
A little grain of conscience made him sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope

Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ?"

To which an answer peal'd from that high land,

But in a tongue no man could understand ;

And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn

God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

“Cursed be he that moves my bones”
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
 If such be worth the winning now,
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,
 A life that moves to gracious ends
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown :
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
 Nor leave his music as of old,
 But round him ere he scarce be cold
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

“Proclaim the faults he would not show .
Break lock and seal : betray the trust :
Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.”

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth ,
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd !

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,
 The long divine Peneïan pass,
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
 With such a pencil, such a pen,
 You shadow forth to distant men,
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
 And track'd you still on classic ground,
 I grew in gladness till I found
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
 And glisten'd—here and there alone
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
 By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A. glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars ; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell ;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late :
One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,

And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him ; for 'O brook,' he says,
'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,
'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not?
replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the blimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

" Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and tumbles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

“But Philip chatter’d more than brook or bird ;
Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow’d grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

“O darling Katie Willows, his one child !
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

“Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonnie Doon,
And push’d at Philip’s garden-gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck ; and he clamour’d from a casement, ‘ Run ’
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
‘ Run, Katie ! ’ Katie never ran : she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter’d, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

“What was it ? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of those

Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

“She told me. She and James had quarrell’d.
Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger’d her. Who anger’d James? I said.
But Katie snatch’d her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim’d, in flushing silence, till I ask’d
If James were coming. ‘Coming every day,’
She answer’d, ‘ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vexed with him and her.’
How could I help her? ‘Would I—was it wrong?’
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
‘O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!’
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

“O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sâke !
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm : full willingly he rose :
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes.
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :
Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :
“That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.”
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He gave them line : and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,

Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung ;
He-knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price
He gave them line : and how by chance at last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

“ Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bays ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,

Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :
Then, wondering, ask'd her "Are you from the
farm?"

"Yes," answer'd she. "Pray stay a little : pardon
me ;

What do they call you?" "Katie." "That were
strange.

What surname?" "Willows." "No !" "That is my
name."

"Indeed !" and here he look'd so self-perplexed,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her : "Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie, "we came
back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.

Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field :
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in !”

END OF VOL. III.

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